

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 L-03 IGA-02 EB-07 TRSE-00

NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OMB-01 /055 W

----- 057621

R 091350Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 2840

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0246

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MASS, BA

SUBJECT : CHANGES IN FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING

PROGRAM: IMPACT ON BAHRAIN

REFERENCE : STATE 51768

1. BACKGROUND: BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE (BDF) HAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF -- AND PAID FOR OR AGREED TO PAY FOR -- THE FOLLOWING FMS TRAINING PROGRAMS:

- (A) RANGER TRAINING FOR FOUR OFFICERS IN 1975;
- (B) ONE OFFICER FOR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE IN 1976;
- (C) TWO OFFICERS FOR ADVANCED HELICOPTER TRAINING IN 1976;
- (D) HELICOPTER TRAINING FOR TWELVE OFFICERS IN EARLY 1977;
- (E) INFORMAL EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN ONE OFFICER

TRAINING AT U.S. ARMY FINANCIAL SCHOOL, FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON, IN 1976. TO REPEAT, ALL TRAINING PROGRAMS ARE TO BE FULLY PAID FOR BY GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN.

2. FOLLOWING ARE KEYED TO QUESTIONS POSED IN PARA 5, REFTEL:

(A) IMPACT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS: MINIMAL, EXCEPT IN THOSE CASES WHERE WE HAVE ALREADY INFORMALLY QUOTED PRICES FOR COSTS OF COURSES. EVEN HERE, HOWEVER, THE BAHRAINIS MOST LIKELY WILL ACCEPT, IF NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND, THE FACT THAT PRICES HAVE GONE UP. WHAT THEY WOULD FIND HARD TO ACCEPT WOULD BE ANY INDICATION THAT WE ARE NOT ABLE TO FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS, BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL, TO PROVIDE THE TRAINING.

(B) THERE IS AN APPARENTLY INTENSE DESIRE ON THE PART OF
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THE BDF TO HAVE ITS OFFICERS GET AMERICAN TRAINING. THIS IS

A DESIRE SHARED BY SEVERAL STATES IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION. IN MOST CASES WE WOULD EXPECT THE BDF TO BE PREPARED TO PAY THE INCREASED COSTS INVOLVED, ALTHOUGH THIS MIGHT NOT BE THE CASE FOR COURSES WHICH DO NOT ENJOY TOP PRIORITY, E.G., THE FINANCIAL TRAINING COURSE NOTED ABOVE. IF THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN, AS DISTINCT FROM THE BDF, DECIDES THAT COSTS HAVE GONE TOO HIGH FOR ITS RELATIVELY MODEST BUDGET, THEN WE ANTICIPATE SEVERAL POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS, AMONG THEM BEING:

(1) A BAHRAINI REQUEST TO SAUDI ARABIA OR, POSSIBLY, KUWAIT TO FUND THE COURSE EXPENSES; (2) A DECISION TO DO MORE TRAINING IN SAUDI ARABIA AND/OR JORDAN; (3) FURTHER EXPANDING TRAINING TIES WITH THE UK AND, POSSIBLY, FRANCE. IN ANY CASE, ANY ONE OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS WOULD NOT BE IMMEDIATELY DAMAGING TO THE U.S. NATIONAL INTEREST ALTHOUGH POSSIBLY SOME OF THE WARMTH IN BILATERAL RELATIONS MIGHT COOL AND PROBABLY U.S. COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WOULD SUFFER.

(C) SINCE THE BAHRAINIS APPEAR TO WANT TRAINING (SUCH AS THE HELICOPTER TRAINING NOTED ABOVE) TO BE LINKED WITH COMMERCIAL PURCHASES OR FMS PURCHASES (NOT GRANTS), WE WOULD ARGUE THAT IT IS IN THE U.S. COMMERCIAL INTEREST TO PROVIDE THE AMERICAN TRAINING. THAT IS, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE AMERICAN HELICOPTERS BEING PURCHASED FOLLOWING HELICOPTER TRAINING IN THE U.S. IF COSTS OF TRAINING WERE TO AS MUCH AS DOUBLE, IT WOULD PROBABLY CAUSE THE BAHRAINIS TO RETHINK THEIR PRIORITIES AND ACT ALONG ONE OF THE LINES SUGGESTED IN (B) ABOVE -- THAT IS, EITHER GET FUNDS FROM WEALTHY NEIGHBORS TO PAY FOR AMERICAN TRAINING OR GET TRAINING SOMEWHERE WHERE IT IS MORE REASONABLY PRICED.

(D) THOSE TRAINING POSSIBILITIES WHICH HAVE LOW PRIORITY (FINANCIAL TRAINING) OR THOSE WHICH INVOLVE MANY PARTICIPANTS (E.G., THE HELICOPTER TRAINING FOR TWELVE OFFICERS IN THE FIRST YEAR, TO BE FOLLOWED BY TWENTY-FOUR IN THE PROCEEDING TWO YEARS FOR A TOTAL OF THIRTY-SIX OFFICERS).

(E) SEE (A) AND (B) ABOVE.

(F) NOT RELEVANT TO THE BAHRAIN SITUATION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, PILOT TRAINING, COSTS, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ellisoob
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MANAMA00246
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760089-0442
From: MANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760380/aaaacsvv.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 51768
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ellisoob
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by ellisoob>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: : CHANGES IN FOREIGN MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM: IMPACT ON BAHRAIN
TAGS: MASS, BA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006